

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE JAMES J. LANE JR. MD LECTURE SERIES

Lars Rönnblom, MD from the University Hospital, Uppsala, Sweden will be the guest lecturer at the 5TH annual James J. Lane Jr., MD Lecture Series during a special Department of Medicine Grand Rounds on Thursday, March 16th at 8:00 AM in room T625 of the Health Sciences Building at the UW. The title of his talk will be **Systemic Lupus Erythematosus: an interferon driven disease with new therapeutic opportunities**. Dr. Rönnblom will deliver a second lecture on Friday, March 17th at 8:30 AM at Rheumatology Grand Rounds. Further information regarding the Rheumatology Grand Rounds lecture can be found on the Division website at <http://www.depts.washington.edu/rheum>.

Dr. Rönnblom's research concerns both clinical and experimental aspects of the human immune system. The type I interferon (IFN) system, and its role in both health and disease, has been a major area of interest. In his thesis, "The Natural Interferon Producing Cell" (NIPC), now known as the Plasmacytoid Dendritic Cell (PDC), was described and characterized. Subsequently, his research group has made several pioneering observations concerning the activated type I interferon system in SLE patients. They have described possible mechanisms behind the ongoing interferon-alpha production in SLE and, based on these observations, formulated a new hypothesis regarding the etiopathogenesis of the disease. The occurrence of endogenous interferon inducers, derived from apoptotic and/or necrotic cells, triggering NIPC/PDC to a continuous interferon production in SLE, has been demonstrated by Dr. Rönnblom's laboratory. Recently, an association between SLE and polymorphisms in two genes within the type I IFN signaling pathway, namely the tyrosine kinase 2 and interferon regulatory factor 5 genes, was described. Based on these observations they have suggested several therapeutic target molecules within the type I interferon system.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Dr. Greg Gardner is planning a major Rheumatology CME course for the fall of 2006 and will be asking clinical faculty to participate. Details to follow.

Dr. Richard Pope, former Division fellow and now Head of the Division of Rheumatology at Northwestern University, will present a lecture at the Department of Medicine Grand Rounds in May. Details will be posted on the Division website at <http://www.depts.washington.edu/rheum>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

There are several ways that you can support programs and initiatives in the Division of Rheumatology. Through the kind and generous donations of faculty, fellows, and friends we have established two endowments, the **Mart Mannik Endowed Fund in Rheumatology** and the **Robert Willkens Endowed Professorship in Rheumatology**. In addition, there are several gift funds that target specific programs within the Division. These funds include the **Decker II Rheumatology Research Fund**, the **Rheumatology Patient Care Fund**, the **Rheumatology Graduate Medical Education Fund**, and the **Rheumatology Discretionary Fund**. To learn more about these opportunities for giving, please visit <http://www.depts.washington.edu/rheum/researchgifts.htm> or contact our office at (206) 685-9950. Thank you for your consideration

Special Note: We are all glad that Bruce Gilliland continues to improve following his recent surgery.



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RHEUMATOLOGY THEN AND NOW

By Peter A. Simkin, MD, Professor of Medicine

As I near the end of my fortieth year in UWMC Rheumatology, I occupy the same office space I shared with Maury Skeith at the outset. The view of Portage Bay is essentially unchanged but very little else remains the same. The then-Division of Arthritis had one full-time faculty member, Andy Healey, who served alone until Mart Mannik's arrival the following Spring. One able secretary and two laboratory technicians completed the team. The RR wing, where most Division activities would ultimately focus, had yet to be built.

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The Division of Rheumatology, September 2005 (left to right): front row - Simkin, Elkon, Gilliland; 2nd row - Mandel, Hoshi, Wener, Nguyen; 3rd row - Tishkevich, Ogden, Dugowson, C. Chu; back row - Martin, Hughes, J. Chu, Sherwood. Missing from picture - Gardner, Gavino, Howell, Luk, May, Mozaffarian, Nelson, Starkebaum, Willkens, Wu.

The now-Division of Rheumatology is quite different. Keith Elkon, who took over from Mart Mannik in August, 2001, leads a busy and productive research group that includes: Acting Instructor - David Martin, post doctoral Research Fellows - Cong-Qiu Chu and Yufeng Peng, immunology graduate students - Anna Pirrone and Deanna Gilbertson and Senior Research Associate - Jia Li Chu. The current Clinical fellows - Cong-Qiu Chu, Tetsuya Hoshi, Dan Mandel, and Thuc Nguyen are supported by three of our recent trainees who have moved on to faculty positions as Acting Instructors - Grant Hughes, David Martin and Neelufar Mozaffarian. Many of this group of board eligible/certified Internists also hold PhD degrees in Immunology - a clear sign of changing times. Greg Gardner presides over our clinical and teaching activities. Carin Dugowson and Mark Wener head up an active and growing clinical trials program with support from Janet May, Research Coordinator and Tye Howell, Research Assistant. Bruce Gilliland and I provide a touch of additional maturity. Our long-time Administrator, Rob Sherwood, supports all of this with the help of Secretary, Salene Wu, and Fiscal Specialist, Gia Gavino. Our work takes place in facilities that were remodeled extensively after Dr. Elkon's arrival in August 2001. The old offices in RR501 are now a tissue culture lab; the space across the hall - which I once shared with our fellows - now houses Carin and her trials team. The cold room is gone and that space (together with the adjacent hall and utility rooms) is an additional lab. Keith directs our activities from the corner office that was long-occupied by Arno Motulsky. The fellows have an expanded work area. At long last a Division conference room now exists where the microscope room once was. All-in-all it's a much improved base of operations. Despite these physical alterations, one aspect of the Division has not changed: we remain proud of the long list of trainees who have shared this space, and a part of our lives, over the years. If you haven't been back for a while, try to drop in when you're in the vicinity. We'd love to show you around. Perhaps we can have lunch, swap stories, and learn more about what has become of you.

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 *Peter Simkin is Professor of Medicine in the Division of Rheumatology. He recently gave "Meet-the-Professor" sessions on gout at the National ACR meeting in San Diego and presented Rheumatology grand rounds at Oregon Health Sciences University and The Hospital for Special Surgery in New York. He had a recent lead article in A&R on the defect in uric acid transport in Dalmatian dogs.

SUPPORT FOR RA RESEARCH

The Arthritis Foundation presented \$50,000 from Richard and Linda Carson to the UW Division of Rheumatology. This generous gift will be used to support Fellowship trainees' efforts in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) research. In addition, a \$50,000 gift was made through The Arthritis Foundation by the Carsons for fellowship support in Pediatric Rheumatology at Children's Hospital under the direction of Dr. Helen Emery. Dr. Elkon mentioned that the Division, mainly through the work of Dr. Mart Mannik, had a longstanding research effort in RA and this support will be of immense benefit to assist trainees in developing their research efforts. These gifts are especially welcome in these difficult times of funding cutbacks by federal and state agencies .



Marilee McCarriston, Chapter President of the Arthritis Foundation, presents a check to Dr. Keith Elkon, Head of Division of Rheumatology at UW.

RECENT FELLOWS NEWS

David Martin, MD completed fellowship training in July, 2003. He continues his research on dendritic cells in SLE in Keith Elkon's laboratory. David is an Abbott Research Scholar and was recently awarded a KO-8 grant from the National Institutes of Health. **Grant Hughes, MD** completed fellowship training in July 2005 and is continuing to work in of the laboratory of Edward Clark, PhD, Professor of Immunology and Microbiology on the role of sex hormones in the regulation of interferons. **Neelufar Mozaffarian, MD, PhD** completed fellowship training in December 2005 and is

currently working with Anne Stevens, MD PhD, Acting Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Immunology/Rheumatology. She is examining the anti-maternal immune response in children and the potential pathogenic role played by maternal cells. **Priya Gnanashanmugam, MD** completed fellowship training in September 2005. During her fellowship, Priya participated in the Teaching Scholars Program and conducted research on continuing medical education with Fred Wolfe, MD, Director of the Arthritis Research Foundation, Inc. and with Fredric Wolf, PhD, Professor and Chairman of Medical Education and Biomedical Information at the University of Washington. She is currently considering a position as a clinician-educator in Florida. **Natalia Tishkevich, MD** completed fellowship training in December 2005. She conducted research with J. Lee Nelson, MD at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center on the role of MHC in the susceptibility to rheumatoid arthritis.

THE ALASKA INITIATIVE

Gregory Gardner, MD, Professor of Medicine, has established 'The Alaska Initiative'. This program was developed to increase the rheumatological skills of primary care physician (PCPs) from the State of Alaska. This annual program enables four to five Alaska-based PCPs to spend one week at the University of Washington participating with Division Rheumatologists in clinics, conferences, didactic sessions, and procedure review labs.

CLINICAL FACULTY NEWS

Steven Overman, MD, along with Julie Carkin, MD, Jeff Peterson, MD, Andrew Solomon, MD and Richard Jimenez, MD have recently established a new rheumatology group practice - The Seattle Arthritis Clinic (TSAC) - at Northwest Hospital. Dr. Overman was a former fellow in the UW Rheumatology and Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar programs. He recently co-authored a book on chronic illness.

Wayne Wallis, MD will be returning to Seattle from Amgen, Inc. in Southern California. Wayne will be working for Zymogenetics, Inc. as Vice President of Safety. We look forward to his renewed association with the Division of Rheumatology as a Clinical Faculty member.